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**Docket ID FEMA-2008-0017**  
**Voluntary Private Sector Accreditation and Certification Preparedness Program**

**Response from 211info**  
January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009

211info wishes to formally respond to the FEMA proposal regarding the above-referenced Docket ID; entitled "Voluntary Private Sector Accreditation and Certification Preparedness Program."  
Thank you for this opportunity

211info provides 2-1-1 service for over two million residents of Oregon and Southwest Washington. We have received national accreditation from the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems, the professional organization for community information and referral services. We have had opportunities to support both our community and others in disaster response. Notably, many of our staff flew to Monroe, Louisiana in 2005 and helped staff the 2-1-1 call center there following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We also mobilized locally to support Louisianans who relocated to Oregon, and we received FEMA reimbursement for that work.

Our staff also volunteered at the 2-1-1 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa this past summer following its catastrophic floods. Recently, we experienced our own disaster when unprecedented snowfall and then flooding occurred in December 2008. City, county and state disaster declarations were made, and a federal declaration is pending. Again, 211info mobilized and supported local emergency response efforts.

As an accredited 2-1-1 service, we strongly believe in the need for national standards to assure consistency and quality. The AIRS Standards for Professional Information and Referral have been long recognized as the foundation of I&R service delivery. Within those standards, there is a specific section on disaster preparedness that continues to enhance our ability to respond before, during and after disasters. These standards are rigorous, thorough, and have been professionally developed and vetted. I am confident they will meet any expectations FEMA might have for assuring that high quality 2-1-1 service is provided. AIRS has submitted its own proposal which includes the latest copy of those Standards.

We urge FEMA to adopt the disaster preparedness section of the AIRS Standards as the voluntary disaster standard for the I&R/2-1-1 sector, and to recognize the existing AIRS Accreditation Commission as the entity to certify compliance with those standards.

Sincerely,

Jeri L Shumate  
Executive Director

Member, AIRS Board of Directors